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Twisted Metal: Black
Black & White
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons/Ages

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High Heat Major League Baseball 2002

Lunar 2 Eternal Blue Complete

Sega Dreamcast Survivor's Guide

PlayStation 2 • PlayStation • Nintendo 64 • Dreamcast • Game Boy • GameCube • PC • Xbox • Arcade

An IDG Communications Publication

June 2001
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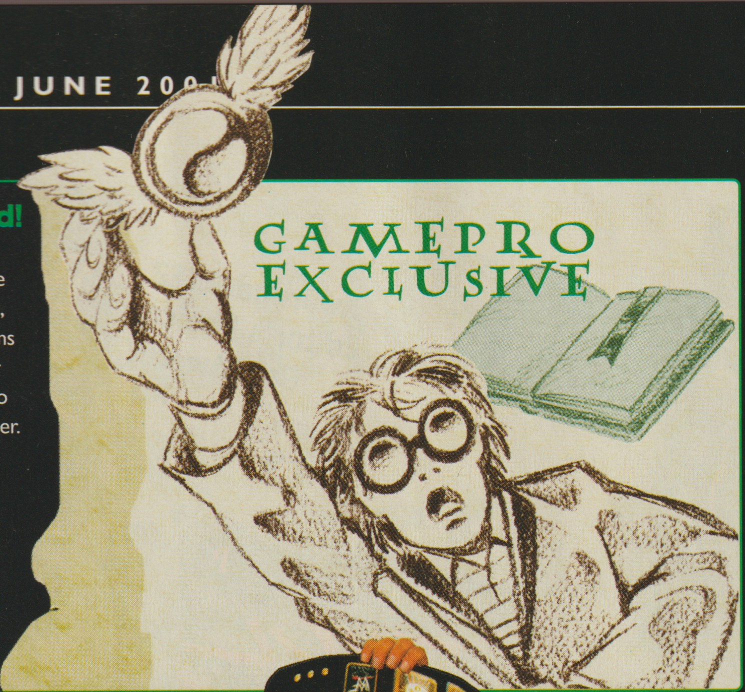

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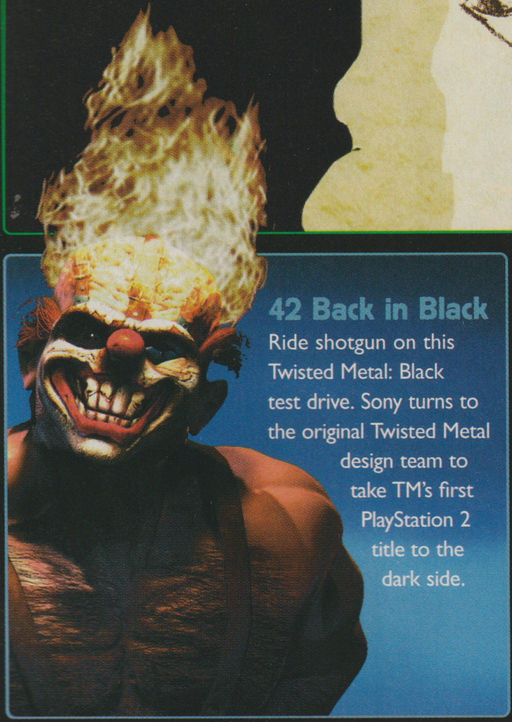

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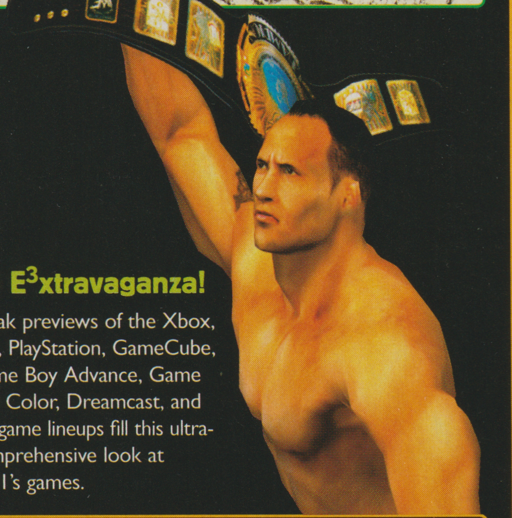

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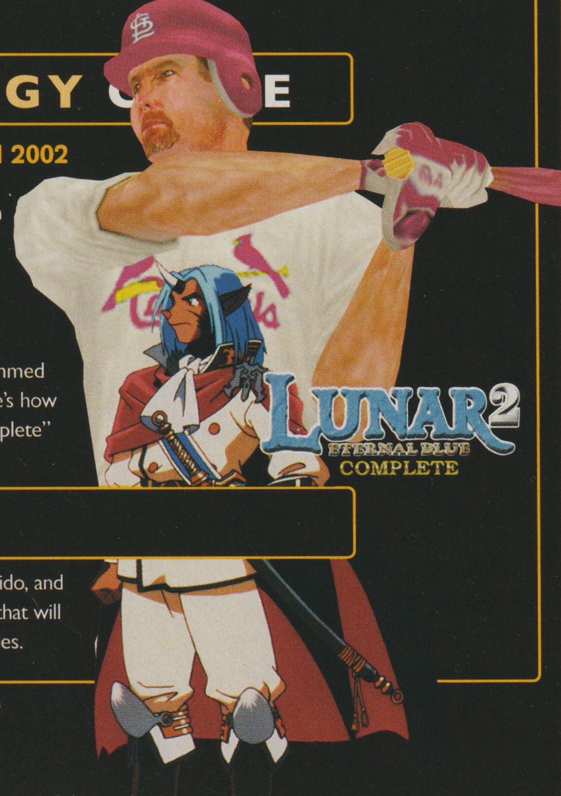

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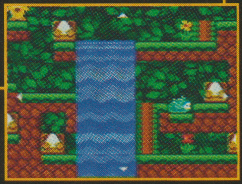
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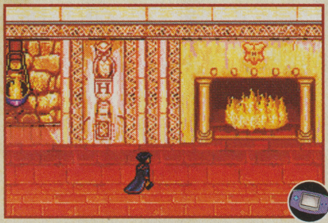
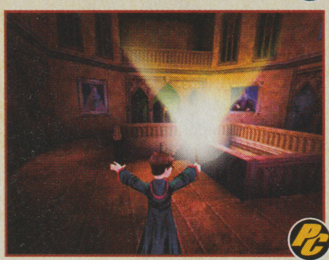
GAMEPRO EXCLUSIVE

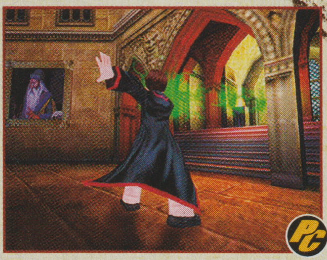
OFF TO BE A WIZARD!

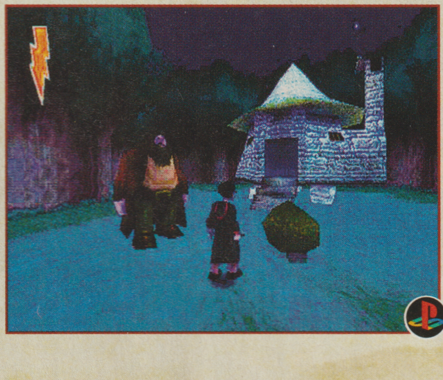
HARRY POTTER HAS CHARMED READERS YOUNG AND OLD IN J.K. ROWLING'S ENCHANTING TALES OF A WIZARD-IN-TRAINING, BUT CAN HE REPEAT THAT MAGIC IN THE GAMING REALM? GAMEPRO BRINGS YOU THE EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK AT THE HARRY GAMES DUE THIS OCTOBER.

BY AIR HENDRIX





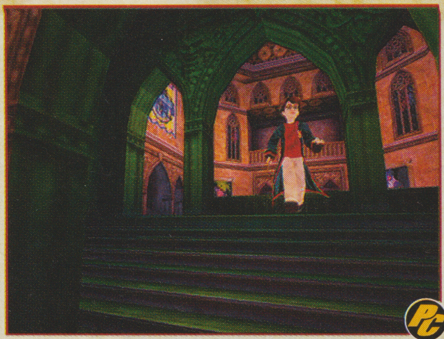


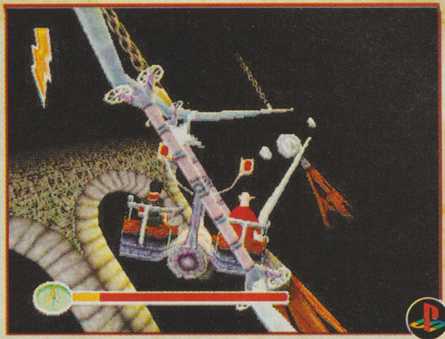


Harry Potter AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

All drawings by Francis Mao 2001

Even if you'd been living in a dank, distant cave for the past few years, word of Harry Potter would've reached you by now. His novels, penned by J.K. Rowling, have dominated the bestseller charts in the U.S. and in countries from Australia to Chile to Israel. The first *Harry Potter* movie will lure hordes to theaters on November 16, and the first wave of video games will lead the charge this October. *GamePro* takes you inside the pages of the development team's Harry Potter spellbook for an exclusive glimpse at what could become an exciting new series of action/adventure games.





THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HARRY

If you're unfamiliar with the *Harry Potter* books, here's the basic gist: In a world where wizards move unnoticed among normal folk, or **Muggles** (words in **green** are defined in the "Potter Primer" sidebar), a young boy escapes his tyrannical foster parents to be trained as a wizard. Rowling's whimsical writing style keeps the captivating stories light but engrossing as Harry heads off to school, encountering all sorts of magical wonders and challenges.

Electronic Arts is the wizard behind the curtain for Harry's games, planning four titles for the PlayStation, Game Boy Advance, Game Boy Color, and PC. Although all four games will be named "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" (after the first book; for more book info, see sidebar, "Spell Books"), they're not identical: They will explore similar themes and environments, but each will offer its own gameplay experience. In fall 2002, Harry will return with four new games for the PS2, Xbox, GameCube, and Game Boy Advance.

Obviously, EA bagged a dragon's hoard of gold when it scored the Potter license, but—considering that licensed games often aren't worth the CDs they're printed on—will these titles live up to the expectations of Harry's fans? More importantly, what's Harry got that will interest your average gamer?

"J.K. Rowling wrote her fiction in a way that game mechanics flow out of it," says Bruce McMillan, senior vice president and group studio general manager at EA.

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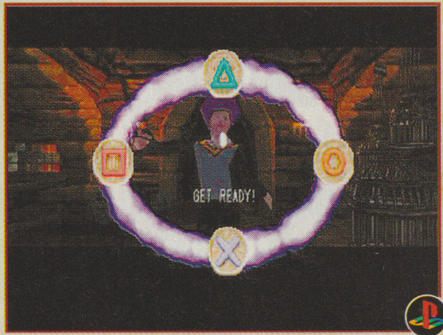
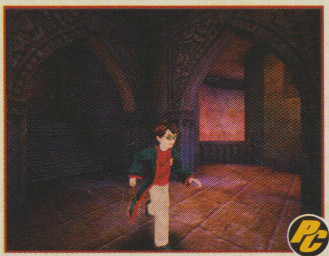
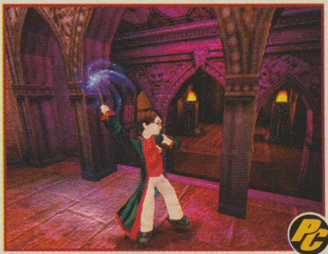
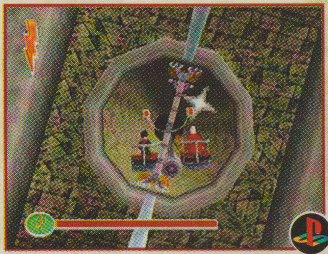
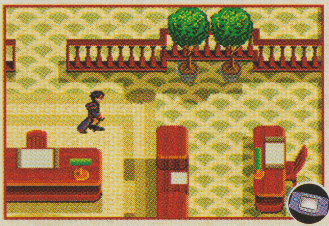
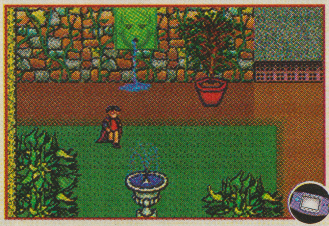


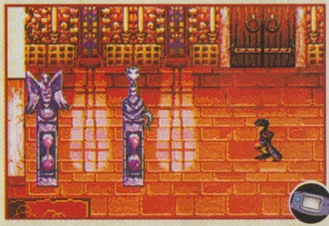


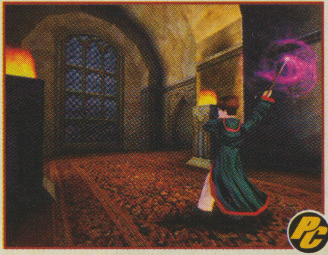


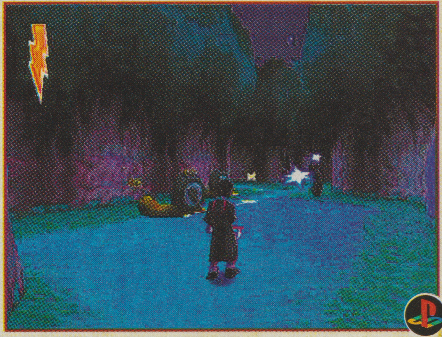


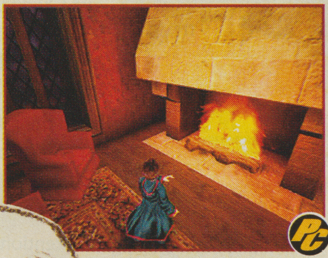


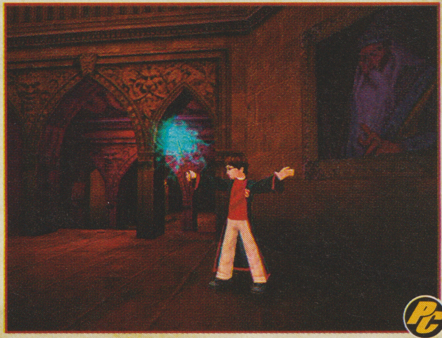












The Crystal Ball

The following is a crib sheet of notable dates for Harry Potter fanatics (but remember, as Professor McGonagall says, predicting the future is an inexact form of magic):

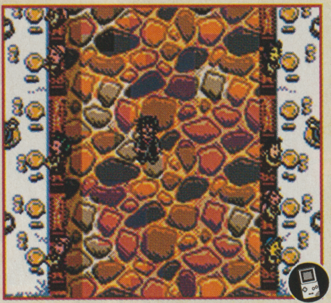
OCTOBER: First games for the PlayStation, Game Boy Advance, Game Boy Color, and PC

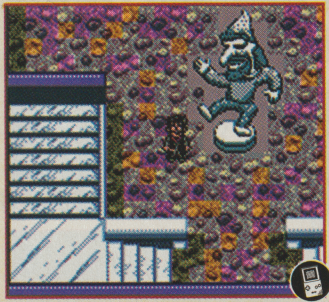
NOVEMBER 16: Movie hits theaters.

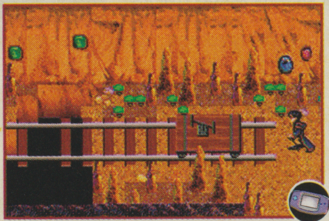
SPRING 2002: Fifth book is released.

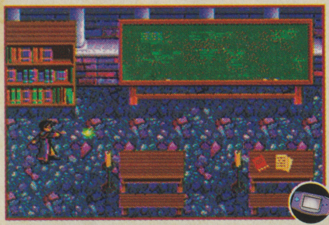
FALL 2002: Movie comes out on video; DVD will have "making of" featurette about the video games.

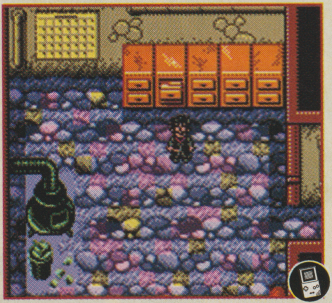
OCTOBER 2002: Second round of games for the PS2, Xbox, GameCube, and Game Boy Advance











The first book, he explains, is packed with moments that seem almost designed to appear in a game: the gauntlet of puzzles that Harry faces to rescue the **Sorcerer's Stone**, the character-building that takes place as Harry learns to be a wizard, and much more. With such a rich environment to work in, McMillan continues, "we're developing layered gaming where hardcore gamers will find all sorts of cool things that casual players won't need to do."

If all this talk of Harry Potter is gobbledygook to you, Chris Gray, executive producer at EA, explains that you still have something to look forward to: "If you haven't read the books, you'll enjoy the games just as much—they're fun regardless of your knowledge of the Potter world. The games will have lots of twists and turns, and many unexpected surprises. We definitely want to reach Harry's fans, but everyone will enjoy these games."

ROWLING THUNDER

Of course, the games will feel familiar to Harry's fans. "We're taking pivotal plot lines and characters," explains McMillan. "If you ask anyone to pick their 20 favorite things from the books, you'll find them in the games. We're not meticulously following the book or the film—there are elements of both that don't work in games—but we'll have the best of both worlds, like positioning a camera in places that the movie couldn't."

What sort of familiar elements will gamers encounter? "A mysterious, hooded figure is often the cause of trouble in the games. If something goes wrong and Harry's not sure why, it's always **Voldemort**," says Gray. Rowling herself has a strong interest in the games and checks in regularly with the development teams—more to ensure that nothing in the games will contradict her highly detailed seven-book plan for Harry than to actively steer the games' creation.

To help the games stand on their own, EA has also developed its own look and style for Harry that differs from his appearance in the movie or the books' illustrations. "It's the right Harry for video games; other ideas from other mediums were not so applicable," says Gray. "Also, you'll recognize him next year in the video game sequels—his virtual appearance will build up the concept in people's minds."

QUIDDITCH QUESTIONS

One thing that should send Harry's fans flying after the games is the chance to play **Quidditch**, the wizard's sport. But a full-bore 3D Quidditch simulation is beyond the capabilities of most of the platforms that this year's titles are being released on—and besides, as Gray says, "with a world so rich, a game that's just Quidditch would be an injustice."

Instead, in one level of the PlayStation, PC, and GBA games (GBC players get no Quidditch), gamers will play a virtual version of the wizard's game, taking on the role of **Seeker** and dodging **Bludgers** until they see the **Snitch**. Then the games will go into a dive mode in full 3D where it's "up to you to stay on your broomstick and in the game," Gray says.

PLAYSTATION POTIONS

Although all four games are intentionally designed to be unique, they began with the common goal of delivering what Gray calls a "be Harry Potter experience." All four will feature the familiar cast of characters, from **Ron Weasley** to **Hermione Granger** to **Professor Dumbledore**, who will provide help and hints as Harry works through his first year at **Hogwarts**, the school for wizards. **Chocolate Frog Wizard Cards** will play a leading role in all the titles, acting as

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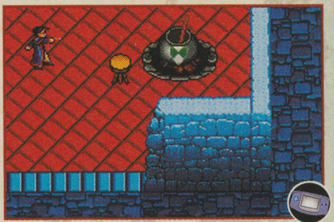
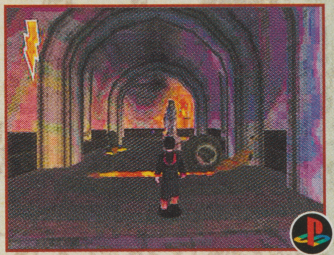
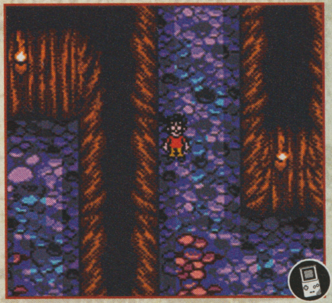
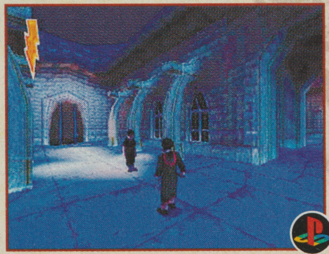
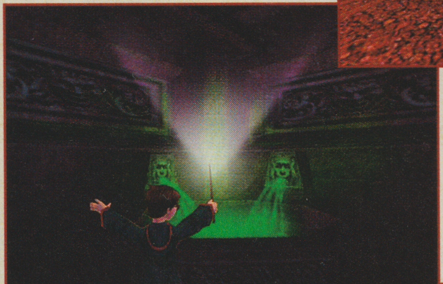










Potter Primer

A glossary of Harry Potter *lingo and locales.* **By Miss Spell**

Chocolate Frog Wizard Cards: Think baseball cards, but for famous wizards. Included chocolate frog makes them popular with students.

Diagon Alley: A hidden London street where wizards do their shopping

Draco Malfoy: A rich, snotty student at Hogwarts who hates Harry—and whom Harry hates.

Dursleys: The Muggle relatives with whom Harry lives on Privet Drive after his parents' death. They despise him and treat him poorly.

Forbidden Forest: The woods near Hogwarts, filled with unknown terrors and magical creatures

Ghosts: Many ghosts inhabit Hogwarts: one for each house, a ghost teacher Professor Binns, and Peeves, a poltergeist.

Gringotts: The wizard bank, run by goblins—it's the safest place in the world. Wizards have their own money: gold galleons, silver sickles, and bronze knuts.

Hagrid: Hogwarts' giant but friendly groundskeeper

Hermione (Her-MY-oh-nee) Granger: Bossy and book-smart, a good friend to Harry and Ron, and one of the best students at Hogwarts

Hogwarts: English boarding school for witches and wizards. It takes seven years to graduate.

Hogwarts Express: Train that takes students to and from Hogwarts. You must pass through an invisible wall to get to its secret stop at Platform 9¾ in King's Cross Station.

Lightning scar: Voldemort's curse left a lightning-shaped scar on Harry's forehead.

Muggles: Nonwizarding folk who are often unaware that magic even exists

Owls: Wizards communicate by sending messages with owls. Harry has his own snowy owl, Hedwig.

Professor Dumbledore: Wise headmaster of Hogwarts who often saves Harry's butt on the sly

Professor Snape: Dour Potions teacher at Hogwarts who dislikes most students but absolutely hates Harry

Quidditch: Wizarding sport played on broomsticks. Teams of seven take to the skies over a court with three towering, circular goals on each end. Three **Chasers** try to score with the large red **Quaffe** ball, while the **Keeper** tends goal. Two other balls, called **Bludgers**, zoom around the court, trying to knock players off their brooms. Each team has two **Beaters** who protect their team from Bludgers and also re-direct the Bludgers toward the opposition. The final player, the **Seeker**, must catch the tiny, golden winged **Snitch**, thus usually winning the game.

Ron Weasley: Harry's best friend, he has five older brothers and a younger sister

School houses: All students are lodged in a dormitory-style houses, named for each of the four founders of Hogwarts. They eat, sleep, and go to classes with the members of their house. Their achievements and offenses earn and lose points for their house. At the end of the year, the House Cup is awarded to the house with the most points.

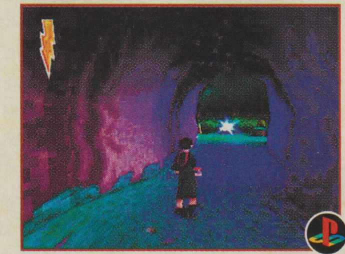
> **Gryffindor:** Courageous and brave, this is Harry's house.
>
> **Slytherin:** Ambitious and proud, all of the truly evil wizards have been in this house, including Voldemort.
>
> **Hufflepuff:** Where they are just and loyal
>
> **Ravenclaw:** Where those of wit and learning will always find their kind

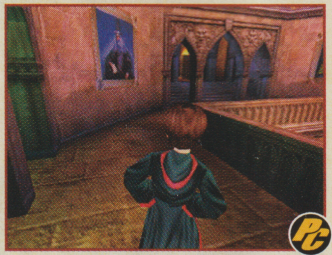
Sorcerer's Stone: Extremely rare stone that gives its owners immortality and riches

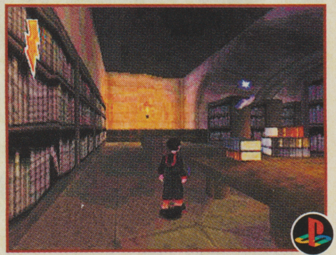
Voldemort (a.k.a. He Who Must Not Be Named, a.k.a. You Know Who): A nasty wizard whose reign of evil is put to an end by baby Harry Potter. After killing Harry's parents, Voldemort is defeated by his own curse, which rebounds off of Harry. Still a source of great fear, most wizards won't speak his name aloud.

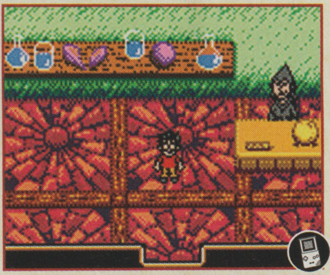
power-ups, collectible items, the keys to puzzles, and more. **Owls** will also help the player by delivering messages and useful items.

The PlayStation game will mix platform gameplay with adventuring in six 3D environments in and around Hogwarts—all filled with interactive scenery, like moving stairways and secret passages. One level will involve a 3D broomstick chase over the **Forbidden Forest** as Harry pursues **Draco Malfoy** (who just robbed a fellow student), while another will take you on a bone-jarring roller-coaster ride through **Gringotts**, a goblin-owned bank that's packed with mazelike tunnels. Harry will also have to rescue Hermione from a rampaging troll and venture to **Diagon Alley** to collect items that **Hagrid** needs to hatch a baby dragon.







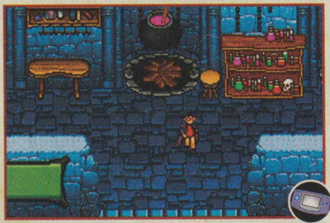


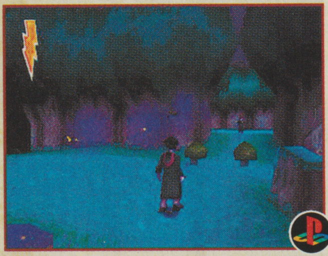
Players will acquire new spells and other magic by playing PaRappa-style mini-games that mimic the lessons in the book. Once you've earned a spell, you'll be able to use it whenever you like. "The polish on the spells' special effects will really impress people," says McMillan.

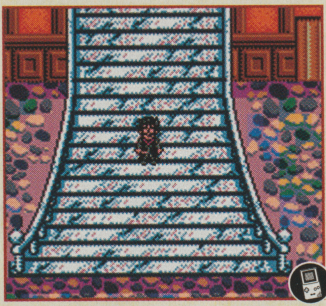
PC POWERS

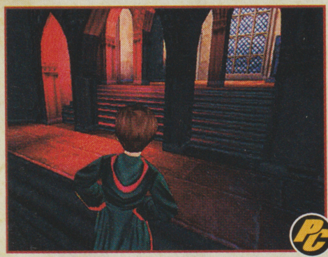
Over on the PC, Harry's exploits will fall more in the vein of adventuring, involving much less platform gameplay. Visually, this version will offer the richest world of the four titles, but EA is also being careful not to max out the minimum system specs, so you won't have to have a hot-rod PC to play. The controls will also be much less complex than your average PC game's, probably requiring just the mouse and a couple keys on the keyboard.

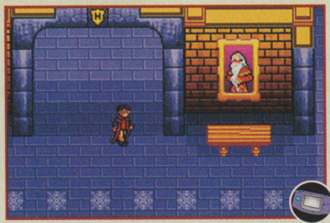
Along with traditional puzzles and confrontations, players will also face stealth-based objectives where the player must sneak around Hogwarts, avoiding the meddling **ghosts**. Some dynamic environments that change over time—classrooms mysteriously relocate, staircases move, that sort of thing—will keep players on their toes. A level unique to the PC game will take the player to Privet Drive, where Harry must get past the **Dursleys** and collect his letter of admission to Hogwarts.

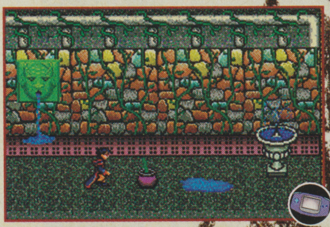


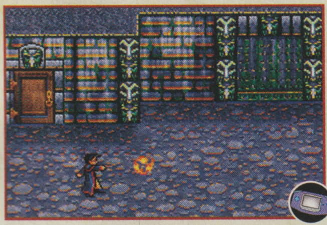


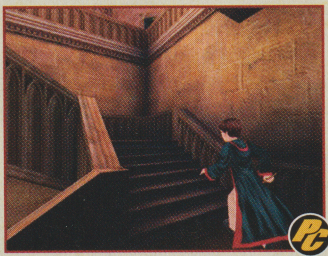


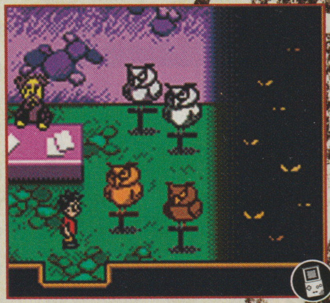


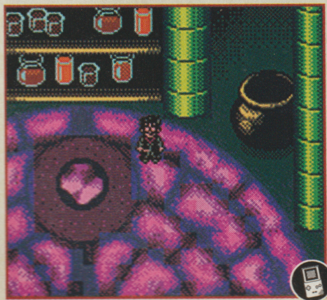


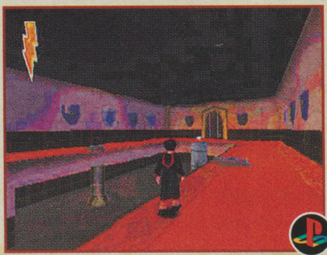


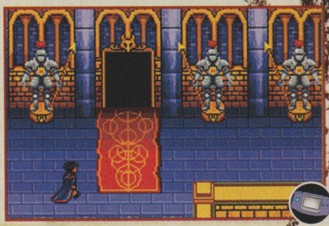


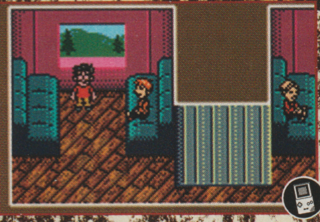


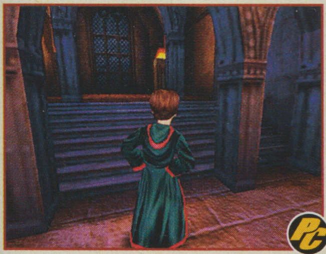


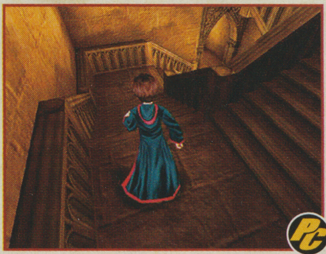


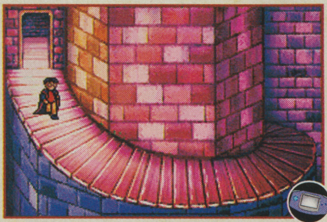


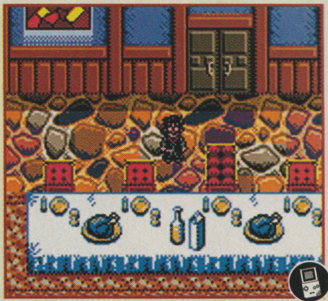


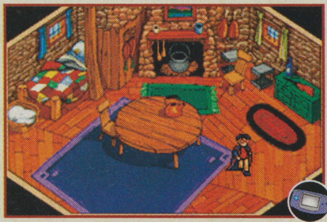


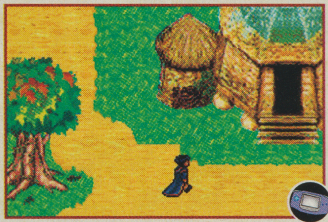


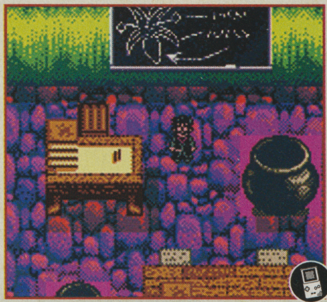


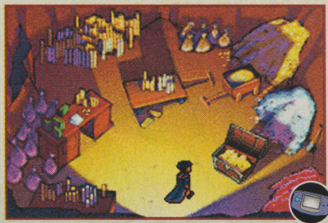






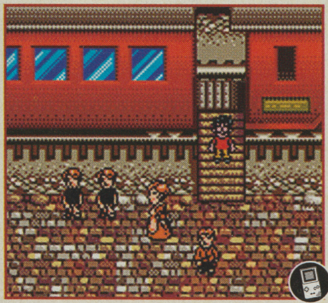






GAME BOY GOBLINS

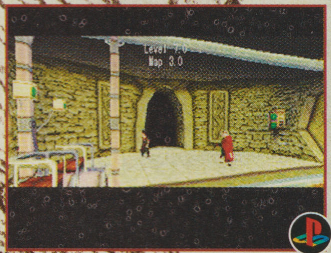
The Game Boy Advance title plans to put the emphasis more on action than adventure as the gameplay will unfold in a topdown isometric view. The game's 29-plus quests will involve tasks like collecting ingredients and mixing potions for **Professor Snape**, helping Hagrid find a lost pet, battling trolls, and playing Quidditch, of course.

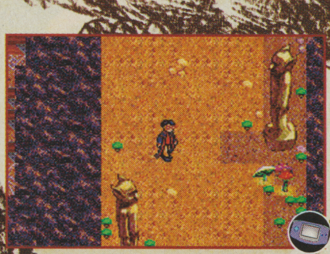


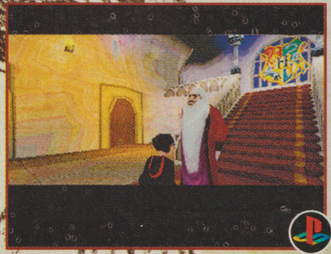
The Game Boy Color title will bear more than a slight resemblance to Pokémon, presenting a topdown RPG adventure. Players will tackle turn-based magical encounters and trade Wizard cards (including two-player trades with a link cable). Successful encounters and quests will increase Harry's powers, allowing him to learn new spells and take on more powerful creatures.

LEAPIN' WIZARDS

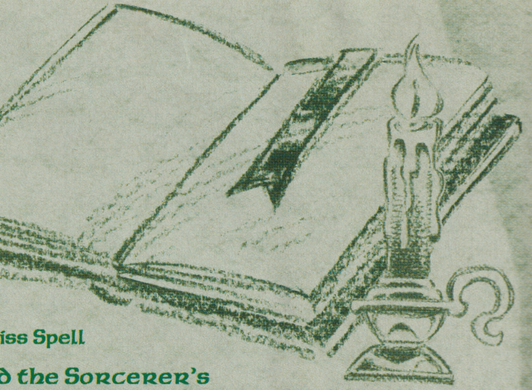
With all the hype surrounding the Harry Potter books over the past few years, many gamers may automatically react unfavorably to the upcoming games. Yet the sheer power of Potter means that this series will likely be a force to be reckoned with in the coming years, so let's hope EA makes games worth playing. Fortunately, the early sneak peeks seem very promising, while Gray and EA's development team are ready to meet the challenge: "We're incredibly excited about capturing Harry's world. We know expectations are high, and we want to live up to them."







Spell Books



If you haven't yet read the immensely popular Potter *books by J.K. Rowling, these brief summaries will get you up to speed.*

By Miss Spell

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone: This first book in what will eventually be a seven-book series introduces the world to Harry Potter. Harry's parents are killed by Voldemort (see sidebar, "Potter Primer") when Harry is an infant. Voldemort attempts to kill Harry, too, but harms himself instead and goes into hiding.

Harry is raised by his magic-hating aunt and uncle, who treat him badly and keep his past a secret. On Harry's 11th birthday, he finds out that he is a wizard and is accepted to Hogwarts School for Wizardry. Harry soon makes friends and enemies, and finds that he's the only one who can stop the theft of the priceless Sorcerer's Stone.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets: Harry's second year at school presents new challenges: The unknown Heir of Slytherin has opened the Chamber of Secrets, and the monster that dwells within is attacking students.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: An escaped homicidal wizard is on the loose and wants to kill Harry.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire: Harry finds himself entered in a dangerous competition: the Tri-Wizard Tournament. And he's having dreams that foretell Voldemort's return to power.